

## Censure of Ignorance

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*In the Name of Allâh, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful*

**by Shaykh Ahmed Fareed**

It should be known that our saying "ignorance is an excuse" does not mean that we encourage and call to ignorance, nor that ignorance has any merits, nor that we are satisfied and pleased with it. Rather it is as one of the Salaf (Pious Predecessor) said: "Allaah has not been disobeyed with any sin worse than ignorance."

Ignorance is the reason for sin and it incites sin and leads to it. Ibn al-Qayyim says, "Yoosuf the eminently truthful and upright said: "Unless you turn away their plot from me, I will feel inclined towards them and be one of the ignorant ones (jaahileen)." [Soorah Yoosuf (12) Aayah 33] (The word 'Jaahil' (ignorant) being used to mean): those who do that which you have forbidden."

Allaah says:

"Allah accepts only the repentance of those who do evil in ignorance and foolishness and repent soon afterwards" [Sooratun-Nisa' (4) Aayah 17]

Qataadah said: "The companions of the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam) agreed that everything by which Allaah is disobeyed is ignorance."

Others said. "The companions agreed that anyone who disobeys Allaah is an ignorant one (Jaahil)."

'Alee (radhiAllaahu 'anhu) said, "It is enough honour for knowledge that he who is not able leaves it and one becomes happy if he is labelled with it, and it is enough of a censure for ignorance that its people disassociate themselves from it." [See Madaarijus-Saalikeen (1/470) and Dhammul-Jahl of Ibn Rusulaan]

Someone said, "There is in ignorance a death for its people before death, and their bodies before burial are graves, and their souls are in grief on account of their bodies, and there is no resurrection for them (from death) until the Resurrection."

The cure for ignorance is to question and to learn, as the Messenger (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said, "Indeed the cure for ignorance is to ask." [Reported by Ahmed, Abu Daawood and Ibn Maajah. (Hasan)] So he made ignorance a disease and declared asking to be its cure. And Ibn al-Qayyim said in his Ash-Shaafiyatul-Kaafiyah, "Ignorance is a fatal malady and its cure is in two things in agreement: A text from the Qur`aan or from the Sunnah, and a physician possessing knowledge of the Deen."

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